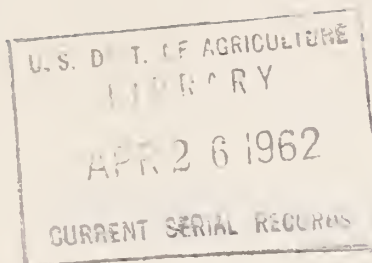


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Leaders' Guide



Town and Country

BUSINESS PROGRAM

● A Youth Program of the Cooperative Extension Service ●

PA-440

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

and State Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Cooperating

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! Your decision to serve as a leader in the Town and Country Business Program will be a most rewarding and exciting experience.

Just now you may be wondering how you take part as a leader. Relax! This “Leaders Guide” will help you get started. Reading through it will answer most of your questions. Directions are included as to where you can find additional help if you need it.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the Town and Country Business Program is a part of youth activities in your county, you may enjoy knowing more about youth work generally. As you have observed, extension youth work is made up of voluntary organizations. Its one purpose is to develop boys and girls into more useful citizens. Through the Town and Country Business Program, you, as a leader, will have the opportunity to help members develop their own talents, teach them how to work well with other people, and equip them to take an active part in community progress.

You also will have the opportunity to contribute to the objectives of the Town and Country Business Program.



PART I

Objectives of the Town and Country Business Program

- Provide a greater understanding of business as it operates in the marketing field through firms associated with agriculture.
- Explore and discuss employment opportunities in business that are closely related to agriculture, so capable farm youth will be attracted to agricultural careers.
- Give youth who will go into farming a better appreciation of the problems and structure of agricultural marketing.
- Point to the needs and benefits of training and education for youth who anticipate employment with agricultural business firms.
- Teach some basic economic facts which will help participants to better fit themselves into present-day society.

LEADERSHIP

The Town and Country Business Program is designed to make use of several types of leadership:

Organizational Leaders Organizational leaders are responsible for the over-all operation and organization of the Town and Country Business Program. As organizational leader you will work with youth, junior leaders, committees, parents, business leaders, and county extension workers in the whole program.

Business Leaders Business leaders are selected from each of the participating agricultural business firms cooperating in the Town and Country Business Program. A business leader will help in each "Key Point" presentation and is in charge of the "Key Visit" to his firm. These people have special skills and will share their talents by giving special help to members.

Junior Leaders The enthusiasm of young people as leaders will become a real asset to your group. With some training and your support they can help plan and conduct meetings, demonstrations, exhibits, and many other activities in the operation of your program.

Parents A Town and Country Business Program is most successful if it has the interest and support of parents. Parents must know what is expected of them, however, if you want them to be generally interested and participate in the program. They must understand what extension youth work is and does. They must learn what is expected of their sons and daughters. They must acquaint themselves with the Town and Country Business Program.

You can help parents in this understanding by discussing their role during the organizational stage: make home visits; call on the telephone; send explanatory letters; hold special parents' meetings; let parents participate in planning; let them help with youth activities and events; and bring specific things to their attention for their help.

You may want to ask your extension agent for USDA Pamphlet 95, *Parents and 4-H Club Work*, and *'Parents' Opportunities in 4-H Club Work*, a commercial publication. This literature will suggest many ideas for action.

Committees Committees can play an important part in your Town and Country Business Program. Appoint only those committees that you really need to get jobs done. Assign specific jobs, making sure the committee understands what the job is. Committees can save time for the entire group. They should report their recommendations for approval of their proposals. As a leader, be sure to recognize their work publicly with an expression of appreciation.





County Extension Agents The role of the county extension worker in a Town and Country Business Program is significant. As the nearest representative of your State University, the extension agent serves you in these areas of activity:

1. Explains youth and agricultural extension work to leaders and members.
2. Provides you with materials for meetings.
3. Visits with your group on occasion.
4. Helps in planning the yearly program.
5. Keeps leaders and members informed about the overall county and state agricultural extension youth program.
6. Trains leaders.
7. Suggests ideas to build enthusiasm in members.

You can make most effective use of extension agents if you discuss occasionally with them how they can best assist you. Ask them to help with the planning of the program and events before the final plans are made.

Keep the agents informed about the activities of your group. Send reports and news clippings to the extension agent. Send them a yearly program of work, too. When agents know what you are doing, they are in a better position to help you.

Realize that occasionally an agent can make a real contribution to your program by being an observer rather than a participant in a meeting or an event. He or she then can make suggestions for the improvement of the program.

Attend youth council meetings and county extension meetings. Know your extension agents and the nature of their work, and learn how to use their talents and their services. Keep in touch with the county extension office.

OPERATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY BUSINESS PROGRAM

No pat formula exists for the operation of the Town and Country Business Program. Its methods and principles are based upon the proved "Project Method." By this principle the young person is involved in a small-scale model or replica of situations found in real adult life. For example, in the dairy calf project, the member copes with many problems that exist in the management of the dairy herd. This approach is a powerful educational experience in developing the members.

In the Town and Country Business Program the business firm becomes the tool by which we illustrate problems and operating principles. The supporting business firm and its personnel assist in providing a

laboratory in which members can achieve greater understanding of business procedures and the marketing of farm commodities.

Nearly every community in the nation has some type of agricultural marketing firm. Each group must take full advantage of whatever local opportunities are available.

The purpose of this manual is to illustrate how your group through the Town and Country Business Program can take advantage of the common characteristics found in most firms. Many local situations illustrate and demonstrate important lessons in marketing, business operations, and economics.

Participation in the Town and Country Business Program

The program is slanted toward the interests of maturing boys and girls. The youth involved in this program are generally beyond the tenth grade level. The project should prove most interesting to age groups often referred to as "Older 4-H," "Senior Extension," or "Young Men and Women Groups." Maturity of the group should not hinder the learning experiences offered by the program.



Key Point Meetings and Key Visits

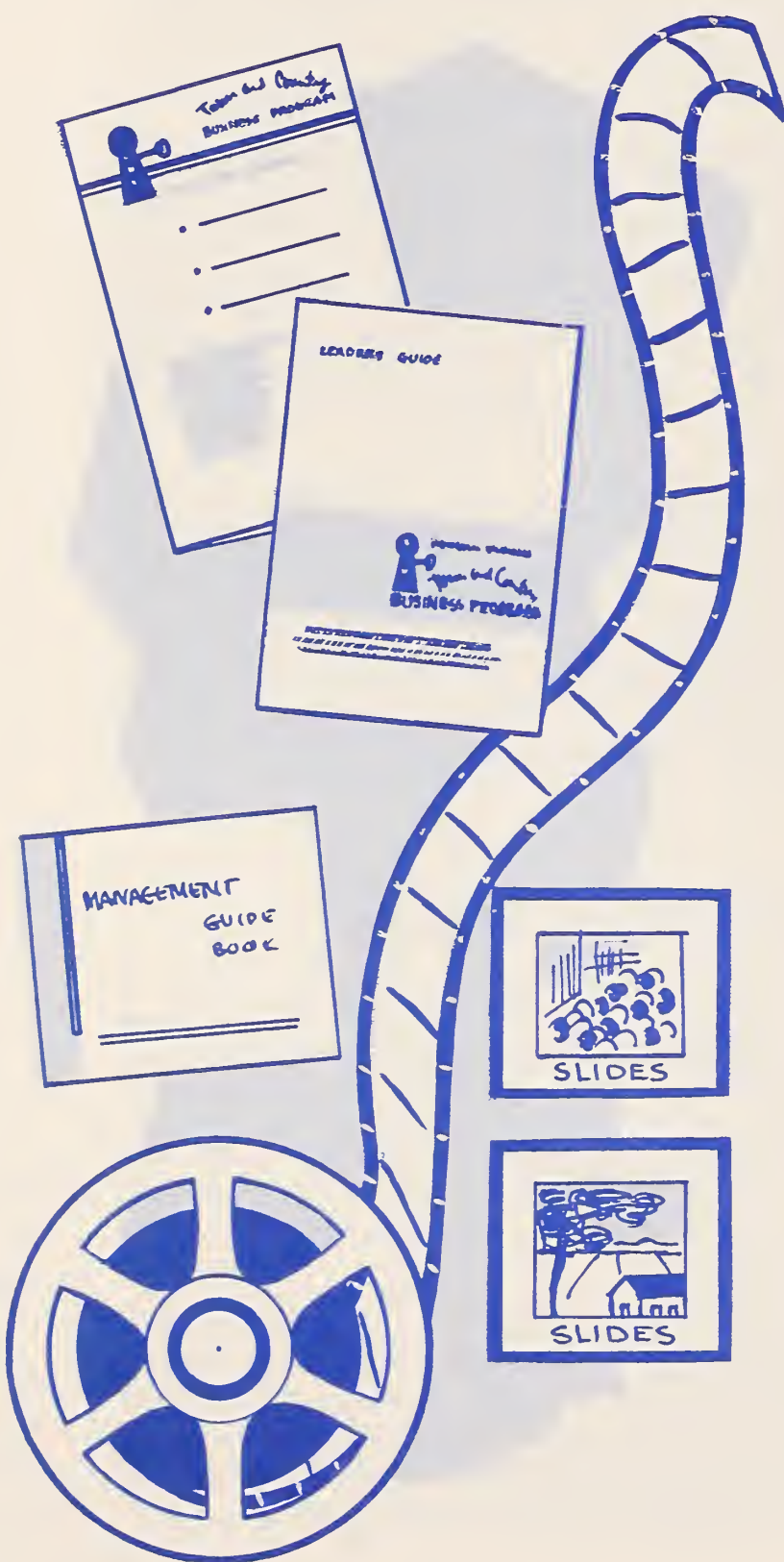
The Town and Country Business Program should have both Key Point Meetings and Key Visits formally planned.

The ideas which are to receive emphasis during the course of the project are designated as *Key Points*. They are simply major ideas of economics, marketing, or business principles that are considered during the Key Point Meeting sessions. Key Point reference manuals are available to leaders, extension workers, cooperators, and members. These contain the subject matter that can be used as a basis for Key Point Meetings. Direct discussion of Key Points should not be extended beyond the attention and interest span of the members.

A Key Point Meeting is a presentation which places emphasis on one of the key points. This presentation is often made by the business leader who will later help with the Key Visit to his firm. The business leader will use experiences with his firm to put life and interest into the Key Point. To help in this presentation several aids have been developed.

A KEY POINT KIT is provided for each Key Point Meeting, if requested. The kit is complete and contains:

1. A Key Point Reference Manual.
(Example: "Retailing")
2. A Key Point Reference Outline.
3. Key Point Visuals. (Example: slides with tape-recorded commentary; movies.)
4. Management's Guide Book.
(A Key Visit Guide Book.)





The **KEY VISIT** is a field trip to a local agricultural business firm, enabling members to observe marketing and economics in action. The Key Visit extends the abstract ideas of the Key Points into real life situations. Economics and marketing become dramatic and alive through proper use of the Key Visit. The Key Visit will help to develop appreciations and convictions that cannot be gained through discussions, talks, and movies.

The big risk involved in the Key Visit is that it can evolve into the taking of a field trip simply for the sake of making an excursion. To be successful the Key Visit must be a teaching tool.

The Key Visit should be as closely related as possible to the Key Points being considered by the group. In any firm there will be overlapping of functions; therefore choose the firm that best exemplifies the Key Point under consideration. The visit should explore the experiences, problems, and processes of the firm in terms of the objectives of the program.

Prior to the Key Visit, discuss and establish the need for answers to pertinent questions:

- Why are we going?
- What do we expect to find out?
- What questions shall we ask of management and how shall we present them?

Key Visits as a Teaching Tool

The Key Visit should bring into focus the *where*, *what*, and *who* of community economic life. Members should understand that teamwork makes the production and distribution of goods and services possible and that teamwork means people are involved. What, for example, are the relationships between management and workers, and how are these relationships fostered and maintained?

Workers and employers are not the only people involved in the production and distribution of goods and services. Members must understand that there are others whose interests are related to those of employers and workers. Without stockholders, whose money has been used to furnish tools and other equipment, large-scale private enterprise would not be possible. Without consumers there would be no sales,

and therefore no profits for investors nor jobs for workers and management. Without farmers, the producers of basic food and fiber materials, there could be no industry.

The broad outlines of the complex structure that makes production, distribution, and consumption possible should be grasped by the member. He should see the plant and equipment that capital investment has made possible. He should know what that capital investment is. He should understand why portions of the profits should be earmarked for new equipment, research, expansion, and investors.

The member should gain some insight into distribution and sales of the products and the role of agriculture to the enterprise. He should get a grasp of the factors related to distribution; he must realize that effective distribution and ultimate sales determine job stability for all workers in the plant or factory and its office and sales staffs. He must see, too, that long-range planning relies upon constant research for new materials, better products, and improved production methods. He must understand why these factors determine production plans and workers' jobs.

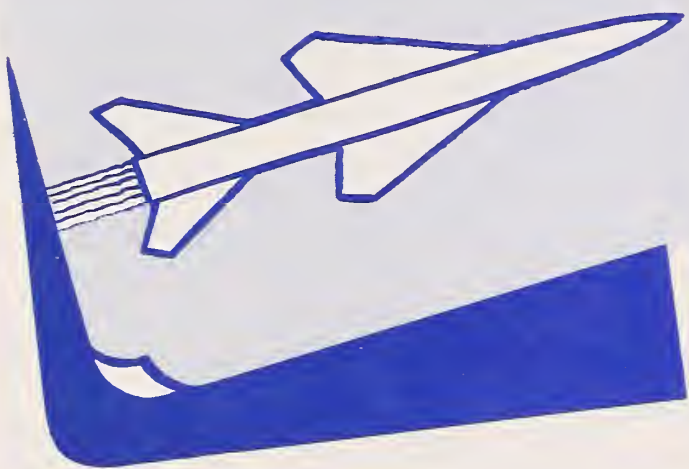
It is suggested that the complete Key Visit schedule be developed prior to formal organization of the group. Tentative arrangements should have been made with business personnel prior to organization. Completed plans for Key Visits should be confirmed with the business leader a week or two before the visit. *It is helpful if the organizational leader and business leader tour the facilities in advance.* This procedure proves useful in calling attention to the important aspects of the business when members participate at a later time. This advance knowledge is helpful also in Key Point discussions during the formal meetings. The management's Guide Book provides an outline for planning Key Visits.

It is polite to have some member appointed to give a response of "thanks" on behalf of all the members for the courtesy and the help given by the firm.

PART II

GETTING STARTED

Planning Stage



Operational Stage

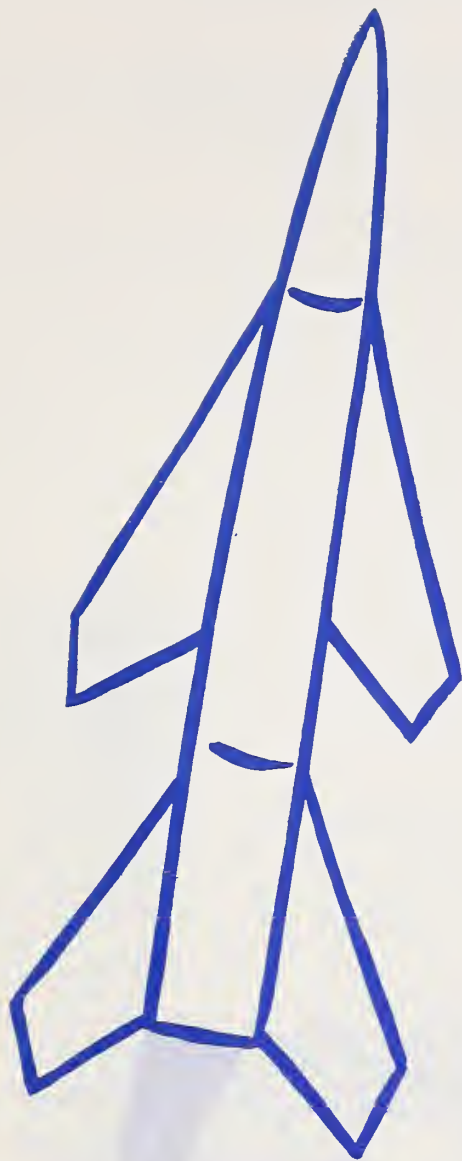
I. **Planning Committee Meeting:** Here the Town and Country Business Program idea is presented to selected youth in leadership roles, business firm officials, civic organization leaders, extension personnel, and parents. Provide an understanding of the program and generate interest among these leaders. Illustrate by example how the Key Point Meeting and the Key Visit operates and obtain further suggestions from the group as to other business firms that can help in the conduct of the program. If interest is sufficient, develop a tentative calendar of Key Point Meetings and Key Visits. (See example on page 8.)

II. **Make Personal Visits:** Get commitments from all of your business representatives. Be sure that the businessman knows the role he is to play in the program, the aids that are available to him, and ideas that you wish to teach by his participation.

III. **Luncheon Meeting (Optional):** This can be a luncheon meeting of representatives from all business firms that have indicated a willingness to help with the programs. To the entire group indicate the opportunity they have to serve youth and indirectly benefit themselves. This will provide opportunity for each businessman to see how his contribution fits into an educational pattern with those of his neighbors.

I. **First Meeting of Youth:** The purpose here is to build interest, appreciation and enthusiasm for the program. Indicate some of the drama and excitement that is present in the Key Points and Key Visits that you have planned. Develop human interest in the successful personalities from business with whom the young people will have opportunity to meet and work. Get youth into the picture here by having some of them tell how they participated in the planning stages. This is a program which local youth had a hand in planning. Sometimes it is possible to have an enthusiastic young person who has previously participated in the program to speak on "My Experience in the Town and Country Business Program."

The Key Point "What Marketing Means to You" fits well into this first session. This generally does not involve a Key Visit, but is used to give an idea of the nature of the program. There are movies and slide sets available to help in putting this important meeting across. Remember your first impression must be a good one to get the program going.



II. **First Key Point Meeting:** For this meeting have a snappy presentation on one of the Key Points available. This is usually handled by the firm which will be your host at the ensuing Key Visit. Hand out the Key Point Manual on the subject which this meeting emphasizes. The Key Point Kit on this subject will contain helpful visuals.

III. **First Key Visit:** Here's where you dramatize the main ideas of the previous Key Point Meeting by a visit to the cooperating firm. Put all the elements of a successful Key Visit into action to build interest and achieve the objectives of the visit. Remember that a pretour of the firm is generally needed in order to have a smooth running, valuable, educational experience with a Key Visit.

IV. The remainder of the program will consist of alternating Key Point Meetings with Key Visits until completion of the program. There is no specified number of Key Points indicated for completion of the program. The extent to which this education experience is pursued depends upon the interests of the young people and the cooperating business firms.

V. **Final Meeting:** Mark the completion of the program by staging a local event, such as a family night, a banquet, or similar affair. This might be staged by youth in honor of the cooperating businessmen or vice versa.

TYPES OF TOWN AND COUNTRY BUSINESS PROGRAMS

General-Type Marketing Program. This program is developed around the interests of *several* local firms. Each firm represents a laboratory in which selected Key Points are emphasized. A Key Point Meeting and Key Visits are alternated during the course of the project. Members can participate in a Town and Country Business Program for three successive years. Each year leads to further specialization in a commodity or firm.

In developing a Town and Country Business Program, consider first the local resources available for Key Visits.

Nearly every community has several business firms which participate in the distribution of agricultural commodities. Your community may have a cotton gin, dairy plant, grain elevator, trucking firm, lumber mill, or other business firms that perform marketing functions.

A Suggested Agenda for Marketing Firm Participation

Name of Firm	Key Point Topic Presentation	Key Visit
Jay Trucking	Extension Office Jan. 1 (Transportation)	Warehouses and Facilities Jan. 15
Glenn's Grocery	Community Center Jan. 30 (Retailing)	Retail Store and Warehouse Feb. 15

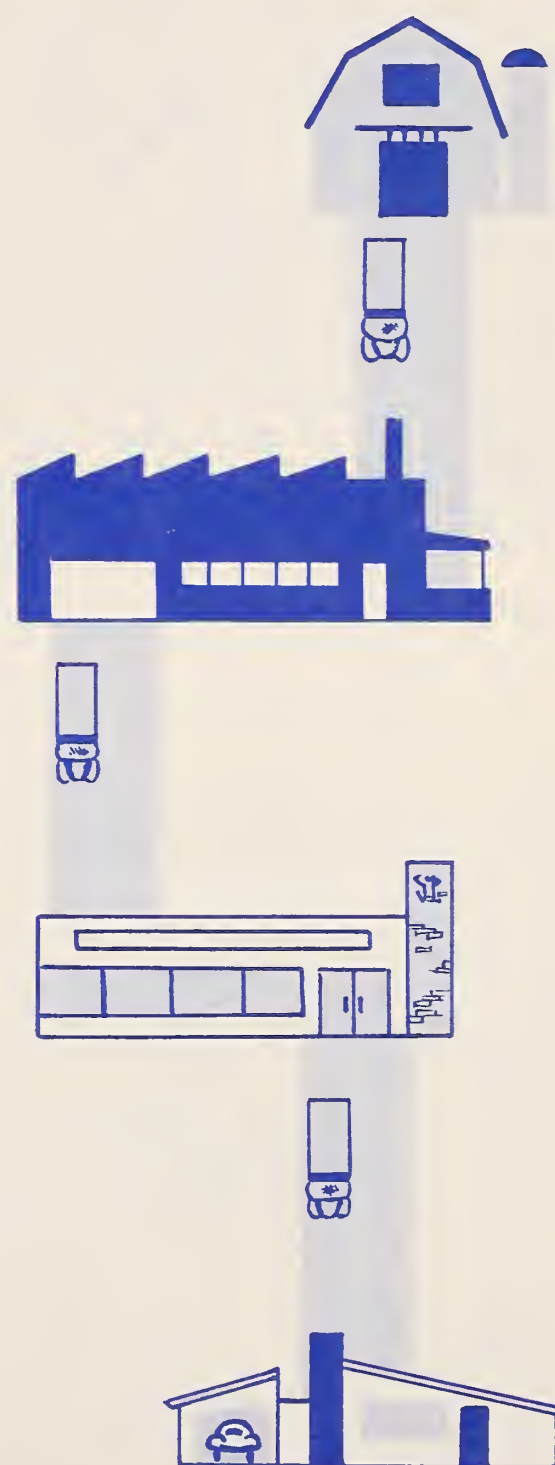
Select any number of these firms which you feel could be helpful in demonstrating the Key Points presented in the Key Point Manuals. What a particular business will be able to contribute to the program will depend largely on the nature of its marketing functions. After study of the Key Points, you and the management of the firms can adapt and include other experiences that will be important to the development of youth in understanding the economic ideas of our daily living.

In planning potential support you will have to become familiar with the marketing firms of the area and the functions they perform. Make appointments with firm managers for personal visits to explain the Town and Country Business Program and secure business participation. In most areas the local Chamber of Commerce will have available lists of firms and may suggest firms that might cooperate.

All of the foregoing description applies to the *General-Type Marketing Program*. If interest continues you might wish to continue into a second and third phase of the program. This provides opportunity for increasing specialization of interest. This should involve the youth who have shown a high degree of interest and participation. In the second phase of the program the young people interested in a particular firm or industry concentrate their activity to that single business. One or more participants select and work closely with the cooperating firm in further study of the organization. They pay particular attention to the marketing and other business functions as they relate to the firm they select.

During the Key Visits in this phase of the program the members spend considerable time—half day or more—in each department of the firm. The Key Point Meetings might be held with the groups that are currently engaging in the first phase of the program, with the more experienced youth serving as resource persons or junior leaders. In this capacity they might occasionally report on interesting aspects of their activity with their sponsoring business.

In the third phase participants follow the same general procedure as for the second year. But in addition these contacts may provide full-time or part-time employment if the employer is interested and if the member has reached employment age.



Alternative Types of Programs

If the local situation or group interest does not provide the basis for the General Type Club, here are two alternate ways to develop a Town and Country Business Program.

Single Firm-Type Business Program This type is a program developed around a single firm. With this type of organization the group considers topics listed in the Key Points as demonstrated by the operation of the cooperating firm. Meetings and Key Visits follow the procedures outlined in the General-Type Marketing Program, but are focused on the marketing functions of a single firm. Various firms, of course, will require different emphasis on the Key Points. The ideas to receive emphasis and the adjustment to be made in the schedule are worked out prior to initiation of the program. These procedures should be developed in a conference of the responsible extension worker, the local firm manager, the local adult leader and a representative of the youth membership.

Commodity-Type Marketing Program This type is a program that is developed around several firms in which a single commodity is studied through the marketing channel. Members consider generally the same Key Points, following the same meeting routine as in the General Type Club. Each Key Point is demonstrated by observing applications to a single commodity. This might provide an advanced program for a commodity production group, such as a baby beef project club.



PART III

OTHERS CAN HELP, TOO!

You, as a leader, can get help in many places to conduct your Town and Country Business Program. The agents in your county extension office are always ready to assist. These people are part of your community and are quite interested in seeing the Town and Country Business Program grow. They are equipped to answer your questions and to help you solve any problem that might become a stumbling block.

You may have a leaders' association in your county. If so, you will want to become an active member and take part in planning and guiding the extension youth program. You will have the opportunity also to visit with other leaders who have this common

interest, and they will convey their helpful experiences to you. They also will benefit from your comments.

Many counties have a youth members' association or a county council. This organization varies in composition from county to county. In some counties it is composed of the junior leaders, while in others, membership is elected on an area or group basis. Check with your county extension agent to find out how your group can be represented. This group assists the extension agents and the leaders in planning and conducting different activities and events.

One of the best ways for you to secure additional help is by attending the leader training meetings held

in your county. Most counties hold regular leader training meetings, and your group will be benefited if it is represented. When an idea for a training meeting occurs to you, write a note to or call your county extension agents. You may want also to attend regional leaders' conferences when they're held in your region.

Remember you can get some of the best help from those who are doing the same type of project. Other leaders and older members often can give you the most practical suggestions. Visit other groups; have other leaders and members appear on your program; attend meetings and events and exchange ideas with leaders from all parts of your county and state.

Bulletins, circulars, and books are usually the convenient references and guides for any leader. They

are available upon request from your county extension office.

Just one final word before you get started. Remember the success of an active Town and Country Business Program depends on how well you can involve everyone in the program. A good leader isn't necessarily one who does everything himself, but one who has the ability to involve other people in getting things accomplished. You will want to vary your techniques at different meetings from buzz groups, huddles, panels, listening teams, and role playing to evaluation teams. These techniques and others can be discussed with your county extension agents.

Good Luck!



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